

*“We run businesses, we are consumers,  
we are mothers, we buy shares. In all these  
actions we need to show personal leadership.”*

*Global Corporate  
Ladies Events 2019  
Publication*

400 leading women gathered in Tokyo,  
Singapore, Brussels, Amsterdam, London  
and New York to discuss the most urgent  
theme of today: climate change.



cocktails  
culture  
change

# CONTENTS

## FOREWORD

## GLOBAL CORPORATE

## LADIES EVENT BRIEFING

## PANELLISTS

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

- › STEPHANIE HOTTENHUIS CEO and Chair of the Board of Management at KPMG
- › ANNEMARIE MANGER Director of Engineering at Tata Steel Europe
- › IZABELLA HUS-MORAWSKA General Counsel at Siemens Nederland
- › GINA VAN DER WERF CEO of First Dutch Innovations
- › KATHLEEN GOOSSENS Partner at ERM
- › YVON SLINGENBERG Director in DG Climate Action of the European Commission
- › SIGRID DE VRIES Secretary General at CLEPA

3	› REBEKAH BRASWELL CCO of Land Life Company	17
	› LINDSAY DELEVINGNE Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Co	18
4	› INGE HUIJBRECHTS Global Senior Vice President Responsible Business and Safety & Security at Radisson Hotel Group	19
4	› TEJAL MODY Managing Director, Head of Business Development & Strategy at Rabobank	20
8	› ESTHER AN Chief Sustainability Officer at City Developments Limited	21
9	› DR. JOLENE LIN Associate Professor, Faculty of Law at NUS; Director, Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law	22
10	› PETRONELLA MEEKERS Global Head of Sustainable Sourcing at Unilever Asia Private Limited	23
11	› GHISLAINE NADAUD Head of Sustainability Asia Pacific at ABN AMRO Bank N.V.	24
12	› YUMIKO MURAKAMI Head of OECD Tokyo Centre	25
13		
14	<b>AFTERWORD</b>	<b>26</b>
15		
16	<b>HOUTHOF CONTACTS</b>	<b>27</b>

# FOREWORD



## **MARLOES BRANS**

Head of Climate Change  
Environmental Law and Spatial  
Planning Law

This year, Houthoff's Global Corporate Ladies Event celebrated its fifth anniversary. For the last five years, our law firm has been bringing women at the top of their fields together – something we are really proud of. And in these five years, as shown by a recent United Nations report, the average global temperature is on track to be the warmest of any five-year period on record. At Houthoff, we have been addressing the many legal implications of climate change, and it soon became clear what the third C, after Cocktails and Culture, had to be this time: Climate Change.

There were 400 successful corporate women in total who attended our events in Tokyo, Singapore, Amsterdam, Brussels, London and New York. Women with diverse interests coming from different professional and cultural backgrounds. Without exception, they were all motivated to debate about how they deal with their responsibilities within their organisations to counter climate change.

Climate change is an issue that's quickly found its way to many corporate agendas. It is often still unclear, however, what the impact of climate

legislation is on current business models, who will be the first mover and what the strategy will be when there is still a lot of uncertainty. Even though the consequences of climate change are bleak, to say the least, we felt hopeful after the event. The consensus was that the changes would also provide many opportunities. And if our discussions taught us one thing, it was 'where there's a will, there's a way'.

Houthoff is greatly indebted to all the panellist in the various cities for their contributions. Your transparency and ambition makes us feel optimistic about the future. A future in which we hope that all your shared plans to combat climate change will become a reality.

We hope that you, as a reader, draw inspiration from the insights and best practices that have been shared with us and enjoy reading this publication.

Marloes Brans

# GLOBAL CORPORATE LADIES EVENT BRIEFING

## OPERATING SUSTAINABLY MEANS SHOWING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Change is inevitable. That is the consensus of the 400 leading women who gathered together in Tokyo, Singapore, Brussels, Amsterdam, London and New York to discuss the most urgent theme of today: climate change. Businesses must focus on developing more sustainable operations, whether they do this because of external pressure or intrinsic motivation. Reaching climate targets means constantly asking ethical questions. Nobody can get around it: "Directors and boards are often held personally liable."

Should environmental investments take precedence over profitability? Are we led by social pressure or are we operating sustainably because we really want to? Should organisations openly share their achievements on reaching climate targets or should they be modest? These are intriguing questions that touch on the zeitgeist of shared unease about climate change. Houthoff addressed these dilemmas by asking a select group of women at the top of their various fields to discuss these concerns and find a consensus. Due to the success of the previous Global Corporate Ladies Events, Houthoff hosts this year's fifth event in six locations worldwide in their respective time zones, on the same day and in a similar professional setting. We begin in Tokyo and Singapore, with the debate continuing in Brussels and Amsterdam. London and New York are the last to follow suit.

Climate change has been a pressing issue in 2019, pushed to the forefront of the international agenda by the United Nations climate report cautioning that drastic action is needed to limit global warming. We all know that climate change has negative consequences, so this warning may have come as a blessing in disguise. Denying the impact of climate change is even more difficult when you're in the eye of a storm. In New York, this is something that one panellist, **Inge Huijbrechts**, Global Senior Vice President Responsible for Business and Safety & Security of Radisson Hotel Group, can relate to: "Hurricanes, floods, water shortages and extreme temperatures harm tourist hotspots and the hospitality sector as a whole." Moderator **Marry de Gaay Fortman** (partner at Houthoff in Amsterdam) and panellist **Yuka Shimada** (HR & GA Director at Unilever Japan) begin their sessions in Amsterdam and Tokyo by sharing their feelings of alienation from the natural world. Like many Dutch people, De Gaay Fortman cycles to work. However, she noticed in the past few weeks that she was soaked to the bone by the time she arrived to the office.



“There must be rules worldwide so that performance can be compared.”

She notes: “The rain in Amsterdam is warm this autumn, almost tropical. It’s very strange.” And Shimada did not have to put away her summer clothes in October like she did in previous years. She believes that climate change is more noticeable than ever before.

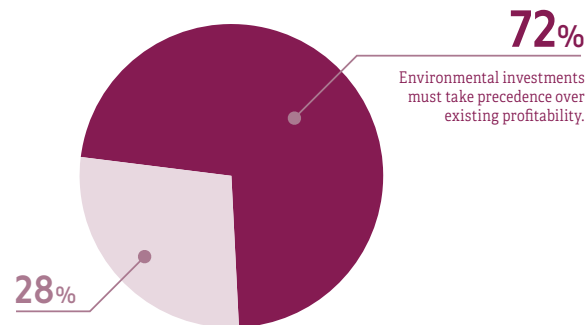
#### We have to be creative

In all six cities, the event kicks off with a sensitive question for all the panel members: what weight is given to environmental initiatives by businesses, or in other words: should environmental investments take precedence over existing profitability? In Amsterdam, panellist **Izabella Hus-Morawska**, board member and General Counsel at Siemens Nederland, answers this question positively and without hesitation: “Because our organisation wants to be carbon neutral in 2030, we have made substantial investments. These investments pay off within three to five years. You broaden your profitability and eventually you produce returns on the investment.” Will board members continue to approve these types of long-term investments, where the returns are uncertain, or is this just a passing fad? A former minister responds to this question: “It is simply a business case.” In Singapore, **Esther An**, Chief Sustainability Officer at City Developments Limited, had a more telling response: “Investors are the most important stakeholders. They also have to believe



in it.” London participants also struggle with this question: “The shareholders’ interest is large.” Yet the fact that in all of the cities this question receives more positive than negative reactions shows that this position, even if it is born out of necessity, is being embraced more than ever. Seventy-two percent of the women, many in profit and loss responsibility roles, think that environmental investments should take precedence. In New York, a participant emphasises that this is not an ‘either/or’ choice: “Environmental investments and profitability go hand in hand.”

#### ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS VS PROFITABILITY



**Rebekah Braswell**, CCO of Land Life Company, suggests: “In order to have the best of both worlds, we have to be creative.” Climate action can be stimulated in different ways, e.g. in the form of incentives. **Simone Davina**, board member and General Counsel at Siemens UK, points out that you must first have a clear idea of what you want to achieve: “What sort of behaviour do you actually wish to reward?” Someone in the audience believes that you should not reward, but punish. In Brussels, there is a heartfelt cry from the audience during a debate on the business case for sustainability: “Let’s stop questioning if there is a business case, you cannot do business on a dead planet.”



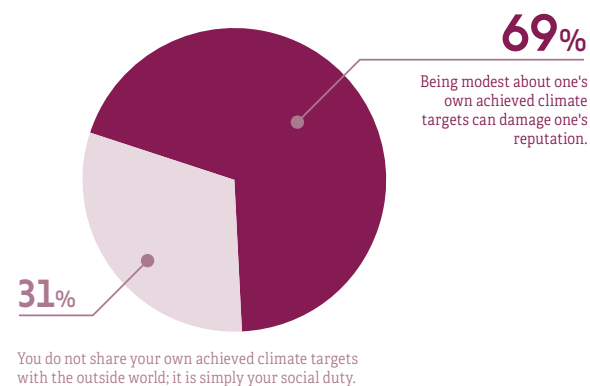
### Modesty is no longer an option

Should corporates and their leaders publicly announce that they have reached climate targets so that their environmental initiatives give them a competitive edge and set a trend? Or should companies keep this to themselves because 'doing good' should be its own reward and it would be considered self-serving if companies blew their own trumpet? Thirty-one percent of the women believed the latter, while sixty-nine percent were in favour of transparency. In Singapore, **Ghislaine Nadaud**, Head of Sustainability Asia Pacific at ABN AMRO notes: "Modesty is no longer an option. Investors require full disclosure, you don't have a choice." London participants share this thought: "We have to not be shy in order to drive change." **Nathalie Guillaume**, Danone's Corporate Affairs Director Belgium, airs a similar opinion in Brussels, but adds that sharing is also a social duty to your workforce. Communicating where you stand must be done internally and externally.

By sharing your company's performance, you also increase the motivation to go the extra mile at the group level. **Yuka Shimada**, recalls when Unilever announced in September that it now runs on 100 percent renewable electricity across 5 continents. "Because of such achievements, our staff is proud to be a part of the group. Everyone has the idea that we can change the world." In New York, they see a problem with this suggestion: there is still no sound, generally accepted method to measure positive impact. The group discusses the need for global regulations so that achievements can be compared. In London, **Caroline Artis**, Senior Partner at EY, agrees: "What gets measured, gets done."

Staying under the radar with your company's merits and innovations often seems a safer strategy than public announcements. In Amsterdam, panellist **Annemarie Manger** of Tata Steel shows how sensitive this topic can be. One minute, you can be applauded because of your sustainability

### COMMUNICATION ABOUT CLIMATE TARGETS



efforts, the next you can be judged harshly for negative impact. Manger is Director of Engineering for the Steel Group, which is one of the top five sustainable steel producers with the lowest emission output. Yet she and her colleagues have learned lessons on modesty in recent years, due to a government report that stated that 'graphite rains' (clouds of black particles with lead, manganese and vanadium) were coming from Tata Steel's factories in unhealthy quantities. Manger: "The communication about this is complicated, because you are dealing with emotions and fear. Are you going to refute inaccuracies, are you going to point at everything that is going well and the progress you are making, or do you wait for the storm to pass? The fact is that some stakeholders are mainly interested in creating a buzz. That doesn't mean that I don't think we should promote ourselves better. Communication is incredibly important." Panellist **Gina van der Werf**, CEO at First Dutch Innovations, also recognises this and points out how important it is for companies to tell the whole story. "Companies do not make clear the kind of complex dilemmas they are facing. An example from the healthcare sector: we want to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, but we also want radiotherapy equipment and MRIs to improve. This is only possible when tests are done with radiation. So, do not only report how progressive you were by reducing

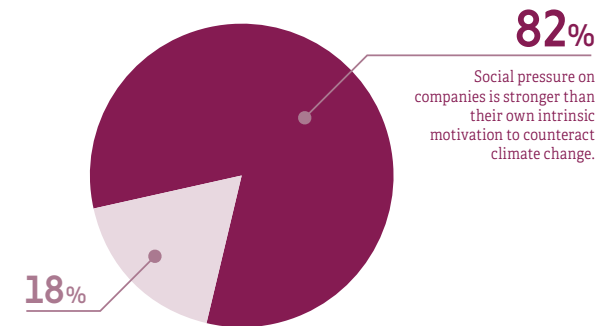
**"Modesty is no longer an option. Investors require full disclosure; you don't have a choice."**

your emissions, but be honest about the choices you had to make and why, because communicating selectively can backfire on you.”

### Personal liability of directors

According to the majority of the participants, communicating openly about your climate targets does not alter the fact that an organisation can be altruistically motivated to change as well. Still, at least 82 percent believed that social pressure on companies is the most important driver for change. In Brussels, **Yvon Slingenberg**, Director in DG Climate Action of the European Commission, does not view this as corporate inertia, but as a logical cycle. She believes that more awareness leads to more people talking about the necessity for measures and that eventually leads to a licence to operate for business leaders. In Amsterdam, KPMG CEO **Stephanie Hottenhuis** is led by public opinion and by the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. “We no longer wish to work for the tobacco industry because the controversy around the sector is fierce and is not in line with the SDG 3: health and well-being for everyone.” This kind of intuitive decision-making seems more necessary than ever for organisations, but also for individual directors and supervisory authorities. In Amsterdam, **Isabella Wijnberg**, lawyer and mass claims expert, together with her team, interviewed 40 experts from 8 countries on the trends around mass claims, inspired by the recently introduced Dutch Act on Redress of Mass Damages in a Collective Action. She reports that: “Climate litigation is becoming increasingly common to force executive boards and supervisory boards to comply with environmental laws. Not only organisations as a whole, but also individual directors and supervisory authorities are targets for the environmental movement, which institutes legal proceedings to hold them personally liable. The spokespeople from those movements explain that their goal is not necessarily winning such a climate case, but the PR around it.”

### MOTIVATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION



### Miracles? Not in the near future

In short, the risks are as big as the goals, if we really want to put a halt to climate change. Is innovation the solution? **Annemarie Manger's** reaction is ambivalent: “Yes, we can expect miracles from innovation, but only in the long run. Tomorrow we cannot make steel with hydrogen, but we will be able to in 2050.” According to **Stefanie Hottenhuis**, the solution starts with us: “We run businesses, we are consumers, we are mothers, we buy shares. In all these actions we need to show personal leadership.” In New York, the audience takes this one step further: “Rebellion is a catalyst for climate change action.” Above all, we should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude. We should dare to take the initiative and simply get down to work. This is the clear message from the 400 leading women who attended this event on 3 continents. Every organisation will have to set its objectives and make painful choices. Or, as our participants conclude in Tokyo: “Everyone on earth will pay for the situation that we have gotten ourselves into.”

“Climate litigation is increasingly becoming more common. Directors and supervisory authorities are held personally liable.”

# PANELLISTS

## AMSTERDAM

### **Izabella Hus-Morawska**

Directielid en General Counsel Siemens Nederland

### **Gina van der Werf**

CEO First Dutch Innovations

### **Annemarie Manger**

Director Engineering Tata Steel Europe

### **Stephanie Hottenhuis**

CEO and Chair Board of Management KPMG

## BRUSSELS

### **Kathleen Goossens**

Partner at ERM

### **Nathalie Guillaume**

External Affairs Director Belgium at Danone

### **Yvon Slingenberg**

Director in DG Climate Action of the European Commission

### **Sigrid de Vries**

Secretary General at CLEPA

## LONDON

### **Caroline Artis**

Senior Partner at EY London

### **Rebekah Braswell**

CCO at Land Life Company

### **Simone Davida**

Board Member and General Counsel at Siemens UK

### **Karina Litvack**

Co-founder of Chapter Zero UK and Non-Executive Director, Eni S.p.A.

## NEW YORK

### **Lindsay Delevingne**

Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Co

### **Inge Huijbrechts**

Global Senior Vice President Responsible Business and Safety & Security, Radisson Hotel Group

### **Tejal Mody**

Managing Director, Head, Business Development & Strategy Rabobank

## SINGAPORE

### **Ms. Esther An**

Chief Sustainability Officer at City Developments Limited

### **Dr. Jolene Lin**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, NUS; Director, Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law

### **Petronella Meekers**

Global Head Sustainable Sourcing at Unilever Asia Private Limited

### **Ms. Ghislaine Nadaud**

Head of Sustainability Asia Pacific at ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

## TOKYO

### **Ms. Kathy Matsui**

Vice Chair, Goldman Sachs Japan

### **Mrs. Yumiko Murakami**

Head of OECD Tokyo Centre

### **Ms. Yuka Shimada**

HR & GA Director - Japan, Unilever Japan Holdings K.K.

### **Mrs. Masako Takahata**

General Manager & General Counsel Legal Department, Eurus Energy



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

## Amsterdam



**STEPHANIE HOTTENHUIS**  
CEO and Chair of the Board of  
Management at KPMG

# "PREACHING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE."

I try to live my life consciously and run my company in the same way. It's something I am vocal about to my friends and community. In my personal life, that means making conscious choices about the way I travel, eat, use water and recycle. I think about the products I buy, consider where they come from and how they are made.

As a business leader, my role and impact are different. Being a professional services firm, KPMG's CO2 footprint is relatively small. But we do have a significant impact via our expertise.

Many businesses still consider the impact of climate change as a non-financial threat. We urge people and organisations to really

understand the potential effects of climate change on the sustainability and profitability of their business models. These effects include disruption of operations, resourcing issues, political unrest, security problems, etc. In my opinion, if these are not properly acknowledged, quantified and addressed, business continuity is at stake.

On the other hand, I believe that preaching about sustainability and putting it above business objectives are counterproductive. Sustainable companies reconcile long-term value and short-term goals. There are dilemmas for sure, but if the focus and the framework are clear, these are ultimately resolvable.

## Amsterdam



### **ANNEMARIE MANGER**

Director of Engineering at Tata Steel Europe

# "CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOT JUST A TOPIC IN THE BOARDROOM, BUT ALSO AT THE DINNER TABLE!"

It is impossible to work for Tata Steel and not be climate conscious. It is the heart of our mission: to build the leading European steel company that is sustainable in every sense.

Tata Steel in Europe is already one of the world's most CO<sub>2</sub>-efficient steel companies, but we want to go much further. Since steel is needed to make wind turbines, hydrogen plants and electrical vehicles, it is absolutely essential in the energy transition. It is our long-term goal to become a carbon-neutral steelmaker by the end of 2050. A challenging target, but it is necessary if we want to sustain our business in the long run.

Women at the top of their fields are in an excellent position to contribute to resolving climate change issues. The need to take responsibility, to seek cooperation outside our own silos and to care about the future generations are aspects close to our hearts.

I have three teenage children, so climate change is high on the agenda at home as well. It is a subject they are passionate about. Since I'm working in an energy-intensive industry, they challenge me to take it seriously and to speed things up. So, it is not just a topic in the boardroom, but also at the dinner table!

## Amsterdam



**IZABELLA HUS-MORAWSKA**

General Counsel at Siemens Nederland

# "LET WOMEN TAKE THE LEAD AND MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE CLIMATE DISCUSSION."

Climate change is keeping me busy; I read and think about it a lot. I feel partially responsible for the problem. My generation has contributed to climate change. Therefore, we are also the generation that is obliged to act.

Siemens is very ambitious and proactive in this field. Sustainability is one of our main drivers. Our Environmental Portfolio tackles major challenges such as climate change, environmental pollution and resource scarcity.

We are among the first major industrial companies aiming to achieve a worldwide net-zero carbon footprint by 2030. To reach this goal, Siemens will invest EUR 100 million in energy efficiency projects at our production facilities and buildings by 2020 alone.

Climate change is and will be a pressing issue for larger companies and governments. People in high positions will have to deal with it, wherever decisions are taken and strategies are determined. Because of this, it is simply not possible for women to maintain a high position without ownership of this problem; without delving into climate issues, understanding them and, above all, promoting them.

I won't be surprised when management boards start appointing chief climate officers in the future. So, my call to women would be: Take the lead and make the difference in the climate discussion. Let it be your strong suit.

## Amsterdam



**GINA VAN DER WERF**

CEO of First Dutch Innovations

# "THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON INNOVATION, INSTEAD OF DEMONSTRATION."

I believe there is an obligation for all of us to leave this earth in the best possible condition for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. This requires us to also contribute on an individual level. For me, this means I live in a house that is energy efficient. And I'm investing in sustainable energy projects, such as wind energy.

Although I do consider myself climate conscious, I am neither an activist nor a pessimist. I firmly believe that the energy transition and migrating towards a more sustainable environment are essential. However, I believe the focus should be on innovation instead of demonstration.

Climate change is one of the focus areas of First Dutch Innovations. We comprise multiple innovative companies and new technologies. A lot of these innovations focus on climate change, sustainability and energy transition. It is therefore part of our everyday work life.

Women at the top of their fields should use their position to be an example for the next generation: through leadership style and goals, but also in the way you organise your work-life balance. Because the biggest challenge of today and the next decades are to find enough smart people to work on solutions for the problems that we are facing.

## Brussels



**KATHLEEN GOOSSENS**

Partner at ERM

# "GLOBAL WARMING IS EVEN WORSE THAN SCIENTISTS HAD PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED."

As a sustainability service provider, I help the world's largest companies to set and reach their sustainability objectives. This includes working to reduce carbon emissions, store more carbon in the landscape, reduce water consumption and advance the circular economy.

Recent studies indicate that global warming is even worse than scientists had previously anticipated. If we manage to limit global warming to 1.5°C, this will benefit people and natural ecosystems in the future. And it will lead to a more sustainable and fair society. But to reach this, we need to make significant changes to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

ERM, of all companies, has to 'walk the talk'. We have set our own targets to reflect our commitment to the Science Based Targets initiative. And we have a strong programme in place to contribute to the Sustainable

Development Goals. We have developed online platforms to set targets, share actions and drive performance.

Business leaders have the power to implement rapid and significant changes. I believe strongly in initiatives such as WBCSD and the We Mean Business Coalition. These initiatives catalyse business action to accelerate the zero-carbon transition.

Women at the top of their fields can play an important role in making organisations conscious of their responsibility towards a more sustainable future. A robust sustainability strategy drives innovation. It creates a positive brand image and attracts the right kind of people to the organisation.

## Brussels



**YVON SLINGENBERG**

Director in DG Climate Action of the European Commission

# "KEEP THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF YOUR DECISIONS IN MIND."

The European Commission is about to have its first female president. Additionally, 13 out of 27 Commissioners will be women. Mrs Von der Leyen, our new President-elect, has pledged to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. I am highly motivated to work on the next steps needed to reach that goal.

I have been working on climate and broader environmental issues for 25 years. There have been ups and downs, but we've seen steady progress. However, the scientific consensus is quite alarming and we need to do more. This goes for Europe, but also for the other large economies in the world, as Europe only represents about 10% of global emissions. We will

intensify our outreach and cooperation with international partners to convince them that the clean energy transition is an opportunity for a modern, clean and prosperous world.

It is remarkable that Mrs Von der Leyen is putting such a clear priority on climate action. She wants the EU to lead, but is embedding it in a broader long-term sustainability agenda. I would advise all women to keep the long-term impact of their decisions in mind and not just focus on short-term benefits or tradeoffs. Women tend to be better at this than men, so we need to bring this long-term thinking to the boardrooms, our homes and all parts of society.

## Brussels



**SIGRID DE VRIES**

Secretary General at CLEPA

## "IT'S NOT QUESTION OF 'WHETHER', BUT A QUESTION OF 'HOW'."

In the European automotive industry, decarbonisation and digitalisation are the two main drivers of transformation and innovation. As the voice of the automotive supply industry, CLEPA is in continuous dialogue with policy makers, opinion leaders and other organisations in pursuit of safe, sustainable and smart mobility.

It's not a question of 'whether', but a question of 'how': how are we going to achieve these joint objectives at an ambitious pace, in the most efficient and least disruptive way? Automotive suppliers are solution providers. They develop the technologies that enable change, and they work with other sectors to get there faster.

The biggest challenge will be to truly work together beyond silos and sectors. No key player can attain the required results on its own. Europe can lead the way with ambitious policy and technology leadership, but must also realise that the problem can't be solved within Europe alone. Given the magnitude of the challenge, we must do our utmost to combine efforts and keep everyone on board as much as possible.

I find it important to contribute to a sustainable society, in a broader sense: values, rights and opportunity. In my work, I focus mostly on sustainability in the economic sense, and on regulation and good governance. But these topics are of course embedded in a much larger context.



## London



**REBEKAH BRASWELL**

CCO of Land Life Company

“IN ORDER TO HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS,  
WE HAVE TO BE CREATIVE.”

There is no greater tool than a tree to take carbon out of the air. Land Life Company was founded in 2013 on the conviction that a business approach and innovative technology solutions can be a force for good. Applying machine learning, and Artificial Intelligence to the data we collect, makes us faster and more efficient so we can have a greater impact on the environment and communities around the world. We use technology as a new way to fix the planet.

## New York



**LINDSAY DELEVINGNE**

Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Co

## "WE WANT OUR OFFICES TO BE GREAT PLACES."

At McKinsey, we want our offices to be great places for our people and for the environment. Almost half of our global office space has achieved green-building certification. We target the highest standards for new offices and major renovations. This year, two of our biggest offices, London and New York, have moved into LEED Gold-certified buildings.

McKinsey has been carbon neutral since 2018. We're committed to reducing all our emissions, and have set targets in line with the Paris Agreement for both direct emissions and those from purchased energy.

As a member of the RE100 coalition, we plan to purchase 100 percent renewable electricity by 2025. We are already at 87 percent. To offset the emissions we have not yet been able to eliminate, we invest in carbon-reduction projects independently verified to international standards.

Beyond our own carbon footprint, we seek to use our knowledge and capabilities to support others who are working to improve the environment, such as through research on emission-reduction opportunities, and through pro bono support of non-profit organisations.

## New York



### INGE HUIJBRECHTS

Global Senior Vice President Responsible  
Business and Safety & Security at  
Radisson Hotel Group

## "I CATEGORICALLY #REFUSETHESTRAW."

I pay attention to climate change in my day-to-day life. Being a vegetarian significantly reduces my carbon footprint, and I invest only in sustainable companies. Also, finding fabulous second-hand clothing is one of my hobbies, which helps to reduce the immense amount of textiles ending up in landfills or incinerators.

Unfortunately, I fly a lot for business. I do always offset the associated carbon footprint. When traveling, I always take my reusable water bottle and categorically #refusethestraw.

The hotel industry is both a culprit and a catalyst for action when it comes to single-use plastics. Radisson Hotel Group has a plan in place to roll out bulk amenities to all our brands worldwide. We are also banning plastic straws and making our meetings and events plastic free.

My purpose is to help my company and the hotel industry fight climate change. As hotel companies, we need to evaluate locations where we develop hotels in terms of their impact on carbon emissions, waste and water. Also, how we can help mitigate the environmental impact we are having on destinations.

Research done by *Harvard Business Review* confirms that women score higher than men in most leadership skills. Women leaders are more resilient, more motivational and connect better to the outside world. All these elements are essential in the immediate, innovative, persistent and collaborative action that is needed to win the race against climate change.

## New York



### **TEJAL MODY**

Managing Director, Head of Business  
Development & Strategy at Rabobank

# “WE CAN ADDRESS LARGE SCALE CHALLENGES IF WE WORK TOGETHER.”

Having lived in coastal cities for much of my life, I have experienced dramatically changing weather patterns firsthand. I have witnessed urban responses to climate change and weather events that have significant economic, infrastructural, and social ramifications. It is clear that climate change is impacting us daily in many parts of our lives. From the food we eat to the energy we use, and the patterns of change we see in nature around us.

Rabobank is a preeminent bank for the food, agriculture, commodities, and renewable energy sectors in countries around the world. Given the inherent risks related to climate change that many in these sectors face, we factor these elements in from a risk management standpoint.

Climate change is a paramount topic when we think about the future of all of the stakeholders we serve. We are committed to developing and sharing leading-edge insights with our customers, so that they may adopt resilient strategies in the face of climate change.

We are also a global institution with thousands of employees and a cooperative deeply committed to the goal of helping to feed the world sustainably.

Rabobank’s global mission of ‘Growing a better world together’ rests on the belief that we can help address large scale challenges if we work together – both within our organisation and with our many external partners and stakeholders.

## Singapore



**ESTHER AN**

Chief Sustainability Officer at City Developments Limited

## "BE BOLD ON IDEAS BUT GROUNDED ON IMPLEMENTATION."

'Climate change' has become the latest buzzword at work and at home. It is my mission to engage and empower stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices and be part of climate action and sustainable development at CDL.

I am glad to have built a pretty large network of like-minded friends. We share ideas and activities via WhatsApp group chats and on social media. This has almost become a daily ritual for me. Through our active outreach programs at CDL's Sustainability Academy on diverse subjects to promote the UN SDGs, the network is growing fast.

The road to the top for women executives has never been easy. It is even harder for women to excel in male-dominated industries. Sustainability is

a relatively new business and there are not many examples of strong business cases. From my humble experience of over two decades in this field, I would advise younger women executives to be bold on ideas but grounded on implementation."

Be confident but not necessarily confrontational. Pioneering and unconventional ideas are not often immediately well received. Be resilient when dealing with setbacks and remain steadfast and positive in your belief and dreams. A strong network and partnerships with like-minded individuals or organisations will help to accelerate action and impact. Engagement and communication are critical. In order to achieve buy-in from both the top management and all levels, we need to articulate the rational and business case effectively.

## Singapore



**DR. JOLENE LIN**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Law at NUS; Director, Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law

# "IT'S BEEN MY LIFE'S PROJECT TO PUSH FOR CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH THE LAW."

Before agreeing to attend an overseas conference or workshop, I always ask myself: what impact can I possibly make to justify the carbon footprint of my travels? It's not hard for me to be climate conscious, since it's been my life's project to advance understanding and push for climate action through the law.

Climate change law is a new subject that is not taught in most law schools. In fact, I recall a senior colleague in a Dutch university saying that it would not be possible to offer climate change law as an elective because it wouldn't attract sufficient enrolment. This was two years ago. I wonder, in light of the climate marches and youth engagement we see these days, if she would now feel the same way.

Many high profile climate litigation cases have been launched against either governments or highly polluting companies. In the Netherlands, there was *Urgenda v The Netherlands*. This case has had significant impact on Dutch climate policy and inspired similar cases abroad. In the corporate world, there is the example of the state of New York suing Exxon, accusing the company of misleading investors about the risks that climate change regulations pose to its business. While some of these cases may not succeed on their own merits, they put the spotlight on corporations. They can create pressure points for consumers and investors to ask a company about what it is doing to address climate change.

## Singapore



**PETRONELLA MEEKERS**

Global Head of Sustainable Sourcing at  
Unilever Asia Private Limited

# "I HAVE SEEN ISLAND COMMUNITIES HAVING TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR ISLANDS DUE TO RISING SEA LEVELS."

Living in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region since 1998 has made me realise how much the climate now impacts thousands of rural communities. The initial dry and wet periods have become less predictable. The imbalance drives extreme weather events and worsens the scale and intensity of floods and droughts.

I have seen island communities having to move away from their islands due to rising sea levels, to areas without a livelihood or cultural belonging. This has made a big impact on me. Working in rural communities, I have experienced what a flood or a draught can do to the local economy and people's day-to-day lives.

The climate resilience needs for farmers and communities are becoming a reality. In my work, I'm dealing with agricultural crops, which rely on land, soil and water. The impact that climate change has on these systems becomes more and more apparent. I think that dealing with the effects of deforestation and climate change are problems of intergenerational injustice, human and planetary well-being. We need smart and modern models for low-waste and low-carbon living, without putting limits on people's agency to live their lives.

Many industries need better processes, from design to disposal. A guiding principle for industry change will be to examine and uncover the supply chain. Transparency has a business case, as it mitigates both operational and reputational risk.

## Singapore



### **GHISLAINE NADAUD**

Head of Sustainability Asia Pacific at  
ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

## “UP CLOSE, I NOTICED THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION AND WATER SCARCITY ON CHILDREN AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.”

My passion for sustainability and climate change issues started in 2010. That year, I took a sabbatical and went to India to work for an NGO that fights against child labour. India is an emerging country and the impact of climate change is very visible there. Up close, I noticed the impact of pollution and water scarcity on children and the society as a whole. It also made me realise that businesses can and do have an active role to mitigate these impacts. After this experience, I started working on sustainability strategies for ABN AMRO; thus, climate change issues are part of my everyday work. I follow global developments closely and am highly aware of the challenges we face.

ABN AMRO has a clear purpose: Banking for better, for generations to come. The bank (like any global business) and its impact on society, economy and climate is tremendous. For our contribution to be both positive and enduring, we need to make the right choices. Our product innovation and new services are increasingly designed to promote the transition to a more circular economy and help reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases.

I also believe in opportunities for us as individuals to tackle climate change. In my personal life, this means I am trying to reduce my carbon footprint by using less and choosing for more sustainable options. It's good to see that those options are increasing by the day.



## Tokyo



**YUMIKO MURAKAMI**  
Head of OECD Tokyo Centre

## "WE CAN DO BETTER THAN JUST ROLL OUR EYES."

In Japan, we recently saw one of the most telling pieces of evidence of climate change. Typhoon Higabis caused catastrophic damage in our country. This should be a wake-up call for all of us that climate change has a real impact on our daily lives.

When Greta Thunberg claims we adults have stolen her dreams and childhood with our empty words, we can do better than just roll our eyes and say she is being manipulated by environmentalist groups. Children are angry at adults because they believe economic activities have been and are still being conducted at the expense of future generations. As a mother of three, I realise they are the ones who will pay for the damage my generation is causing.

As an officer of the OECD, I am aware there are several policy tools and regulatory measurements that can be effective if deployed swiftly. At the OECD, we are committed to working with stakeholders such as governments, businesses and civil society to develop and implement better climate policies. Our recent work includes effective tax policies to mitigate the environmental impact resulting from economic activities.

However, countries are at different levels of economic development, and therefore their short-term needs vary when it comes to energy generation and supply. It is a global challenge requiring global solutions, but the reality is not all countries share the same sense of urgency and priorities.

## AFTERWORD



**ELISABETH HOUTMAN**

Head of Marketing at Houthoff

Every year when we begin to plan our next Global Corporate Ladies event, I ask myself the same question: 'Do we really still need a women's event?' And every year, just before our Global Corporate Ladies event, I attend the International Bar Association Annual Conference where the gender disparity among participants shows me that we do.

Throughout this year, we have raised the issue of climate change with different target audiences. We challenged in-house counsel, C-suite executives and boards to look at the impact of new climate legislation on their roles. And as you have just read, we addressed this question directly to corporate women. And it makes me wonder if there is a difference in how men and women perceive the issue of climate change. Would a female board member say "Shareholders are not paying me to worry about my children's environmental inheritance"? Would the debate in six cities have been different if there had been a gender-diverse audience?

We hope to explore these questions next year and conduct research among a more gender-diverse group. Who are the frontrunners in the climate change debate and who achieves the best results in the corporate world? Women or men?

No matter your gender, I do hope you were inspired by either visiting one of our events or reading this publication.

Thank you to all those who participated and made it such a successful event. We look forward to what our 2020 edition will bring!

Elisabeth Houtman

## HOUTHOFF CONTACTS

# Amsterdam



**MARRY DE GAAY FORTMAN**

**PARTNER**

T +31 20 605 61 65

M +31 6 5375 8942

[m.fortman@houthoff.com](mailto:m.fortman@houthoff.com)



**MARLOES BRANS**

**COUNSEL**

T +31 20 605 69 18

M +31 6 1496 9273

[m.brans@houthoff.com](mailto:m.brans@houthoff.com)

# Brussels



**SYLVIA DIKMANS**  
TAX LAWYER | PARTNER  
T +31 20 605 69 33  
M +31 6 4316 3074  
s.dikmans@houthoff.com



**ANGENITA PEX**  
COUNSEL  
T +31 10 217 25 09  
M +31 6 2387 9720  
a.pex@houthoff.com



**GREETJE VAN HEEZIK**  
COUNSEL  
T +32 2 507 98 10  
M +32 4 7586 8593  
g.van.heezik@houthoff.com

# London



**JESSICA TERPSTRA**  
PARTNER

T +44 207 422 50 42  
M +44 793 250 73 92  
j.terpstra@houthoff.com



**MEREL ZWANKHUIZEN**  
CIVIL-LAW NOTARY | COUNSEL

T +31 20 605 65 66  
M +31 6 1015 3522  
m.zwankhuizen@houthoff.com

## New York



**HELENA SPRENGER**

PARTNER

T +1 212 403 67 05

M +31 6 465 521 320

[h.sprenger@houthoff.com](mailto:h.sprenger@houthoff.com)

# Singapore



**MARIELLE KOPPENOL-LAFORCE**

**PARTNER**

T +31 10 217 25 25

M +31 6 5152 1024

[m.koppenol@houthoff.com](mailto:m.koppenol@houthoff.com)



**ESTHER VELTMAN**

**REPRESENTATIVE**

M +65 9168 4121

[e.veltman@houthoff.com](mailto:e.veltman@houthoff.com)



# Tokyo



**KYOKO TOLLENAAR**

CIVIL-LAW NOTARY | PARTNER

T +31 20 605 69 55

M +31 6 5365 5667

[k.tollenaar@houthoff.com](mailto:k.tollenaar@houthoff.com)



**CECILE EIJSINK-BONNIER**

REPRESENTATIVE

T +81 80 93 87 48 61

[c.bonnier@houthoff.com](mailto:c.bonnier@houthoff.com)

**This is a Houthoff publication**

*Text & interviews:* **Dave Cohen, Elisabeth Houtman,**

**Elise Fikse and Nicole Gommers**

*Final editing:* **Ger van Beem, Jessica Lacey**

*Design:* **Marc Jansen**

This is a Houthoff publication. Should you have any questions or comments regarding this publication (or its content), please feel free to contact us by sending an e-mail to [info@houthoff.com](mailto:info@houthoff.com).

[www.houthoff.com](http://www.houthoff.com)

AMSTERDAM



ROTTERDAM



BRUSSELS



LONDON



NEW YORK



HOUSTON



SINGAPORE



TOKYO